


MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center and Gardens
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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: March 2, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XI: Consideration of resolution authorizing acceptance of trail, access, and conservation easements along Chaparral Road, unincorporated Ventura County.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing acceptance of trail, access, and conservation easements along Chaparral Road and Sorority Lane in unincorporated Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Background: The south slope of Chatsworth Peak and Box Canyon are unique portions of the Los Angeles River watershed. Both areas are under development pressure as builders find ways to construct houses and driveways on sub-standard lots, streets, and easements. Staff is working to acquire fee interests, conservation easements, and trail easements in the subject area. However, to date all of the development (whether appropriate or not) has been put in under ministerial means and thus the opportunity for reasonable exactions is non-existent. The core set of local developers do not appear to have an interest in providing any public access, official or unofficial.

To set a precedent of guaranteeing public access to this large natural area located just west of the Santa Susana State Historic Park, a set of homeowners on Chaparral Road, and adjacent Sorority Lane, have offered to donate non-exclusive, perpetual easements and rights of ways for pedestrians and administrative access to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Those easements would be recorded by the subject property owners against roadway portion of their own properties at no cost to the MRCA. The MRCA would subsequently accept the easements via Quit Claim Deeds. When a sufficient chain of easements is assembled over the private street, the MRCA will have secured a permanent public access way from the intersection of Box Canyon Road to the Ventura County line, which follows County Line Road. Dozens of paper streets lead north from County Line Road into the subject natural area. Hopefully many of these paper streets will remain open for public access in perpetuity. There are no costs or maintenance costs associated with this action.